

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00

ACDA-07 MCE-00 /091 W

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R 101344Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5323

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

USCINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR IN

SUBJ: RAJYA SABHA DEBATE ON FOREIGN POLICY

REF: NEW DELHI 9343

SUMMARY: RESPONDING DURING A RAJYA SABHA DEBATE
AUGUST 9 TO OPPOSITION CHARGES OF DEVIATIONS IN INDIAN
FOREIGN POLICY FROM TRADITIONAL NON-ALIGNMENT, FOREIGN
MINISTER VAJPAYEE STRESSED THE CONTINUITY IN INDIA'S
POLICY MUCH AS HE HAD DONE IN HIS SPEECH TO THE LOK
SABHA IN JUNE. HOWEVER, SINE CONGRESS AND CPI MEMBERS
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HAD ACCUSED THE JANATA GOVERNMENT OF POLICY SHIFTS
RANGING FROM QUOTE SUBTEL AND SLIGHT UNQUOTE
DEVIATIONS TO OUTRIGHT KNUCKLING UNDER TO AMERICAN
PRESSURE, VAJPAYEE TAILORED HIS RESPONSES TO REFUTE
THESE CHARGES. HE SPOKE OF ACFCEPTING PRESIDENT
CARTER'S OFFER OF FRIENDSHIP, WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE
BASED ON EQUALITY WITH NO CONDITIONS ATTACHED. HE

EMPHASIZED AGAIN THAT RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION WERE GOOD BUT DID NOT PREVENT FRIENDSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. VAJPAYEE DEFENDED THE DESAI ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA AND WAS CAREFUL TO STRIKE ONLY A POSITIVE NOTE IN HIS DISCUSSION OF SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS. HE STRESSED THE DELICACY OF RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. FOR THE MOST PART, HE IGNORED OPPOSITION REFERENCES TO SPECIFIC ISSUES SUCH AS THE INDIAN OCEAN, DIEGO GARCIA AND ARMS SUPPLIES, AND KEPT TO THE BROAD OUTLINES OF INDIA'S POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

1. RESPONDING DURING A RAJYA SABHA DEBATE AUGUST 9 TO OPPOSITION CHARGES OF DEVIATIONS IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE DESAI ADMINISTRATION, FOREIGN MINISTER A B VAJPAYEE SAID THAT INDIA'S POLICY WAS NOT STATIC BUT DYNAMIC; IT WOULD BE FLEXIBLE TO MEETING CHANGING SITUATIONS BUT IT WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE PRESSURE OF ANY POWER. SINCE IN THEIR SPEECHES THE CONGRESS AND CPI MEMBERS HAD ACCUSED THE JANATA GOVERNMENT OF POLICY SHIFTS RANGING FROM QUOTE SUBTLE AND SLIGHT UNQUOTE DEVIATIONS TO OUTRIGHT KNUCKLING UNDER TO AMERICAN PRESSURE, VAJPAYEE IN HIS RESPONSE STRESSED THE CONTINUITY IN INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE, MUCH AS HE HAD DONE IN HIS SPEECH TO THE LOK SABHA IN JUNE (REFTEL). HE EMPHASIZED AGAIN THAT RELATIONS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH THE SOVIET UNION WERE GOOD BUT DID NOT PREVENT FRIENDSHIP WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. VAJPAYEE SAID THAT INDIA HAS DECIDED TO GRASP THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED BY AMERICA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT CARTER. HE CALLED IT A FRIENDSHIP THAT WOULD BE BASED ON EQUALITY AND IN THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION, WITH NO CONDITIONS ATTACHED. INDIA, HE SAID, DID NOT SEEK FRIENDSHIP WITH THE US FOR THE SAKE OF ECONOMIC AID. IF THE US AND USSR CAN SIT TOGETHER TO DISCUSS DISARMAMENT IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE MIDDLE EAST, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, WHY THEN COULD INDIA NOT WELCOME THE FACT THAT THE US WANTS TO CORRECT QUOTE THE MISTAKE UNQUOTE IT MADE IN 1971. HIS REMARKS ON NUCLEAR ISSUES ARE REPORTED SEPTEL.

2. VAJPAYEE CHIDED OPPOSITION MEMBERS FOR RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY WHEN SUCH DOUBTS DID NOT EXIST INTERNATIONALLY. INSISTING THAT THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN THE GOI'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY, VAJPAYEE CITED HIS OWN POSITION HELD SINCE 1967 THAT ISRAEL MUST VACATE ARAB LANDS BECAUSE THERE CAN BE NO SUPPORT FOR AGGRESSION AND STRESSED THAT INDIA'S

POSITION IS BOUND BY THE UN RESOLUTIONS ON THE MIDDLE

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EAST. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED TO ENLARGE THE MORAL, POLITICAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION HAD GIVEN TO THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. REPLYING INDIRECTLY TO OPPOSITION SUGGESTIONS THAT SUCH SUPPORT WOULD BE LESSENED BECAUSE OF EXTERNAL PRESSURE, VAJPAYEE SAID, QUOTE WE WILL DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO END WHITE RULE, AND IF SOME COUNTRIES GET ANGRY WITH US FOR THIS, WE ARE NOT WORRIED. UNQUOTE. REGARDING SOUTHEAST ASIA, HE SAID THAT THE GOI LOOKED WITH GREAT INTEREST TOWARD COOPERATING WITH ASEAN. WITH REFERENCE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT ASEAN WAS BECOMING AN IMPERIALIST BASTION, HE ADDED THAT INDIA WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE ASEAN USED AS A VEHICLE OF ANTI-COMMUNISM. VAJPAYEE SAID THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE SUGGESTION MADE BY FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER DINESH SINGH THAT THE ASIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BE REVIVED.

3. ON SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS, VAJPAYEE DID NOT RESPOND TO FARS EXPRESSED ABOUT THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN AND ARMS SUPPLY TO PAKISTAN. HE SAID ONLY THAT INDIA WANTED A STABLE PAKISTAN, WAS CAREFUL NOT TO COMMENT UPON INTERNAL PAKISTANI AFFAIRS, AND HOPED THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD THERE SOON SO THAT THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS COULD BE STEPPED UP. HE NOTED THAT THE PEOPLE OF SRI LANKA, AS IN INDIA, HAD CHANGED GOVERNMENTS THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS AND SAID THAT THE GOI WAS HAPPY THAT THE NEW COLOMBO GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED FAITH IN NON-ALIGNMENT. VAJPAYEE DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH NEPAL AS VERY GOOD AND EVEN QUOTE SWEETER UNQUOTE SINCE HIS VISIT TO KATHMANDU. BOTH VAJPAYEE AND DEFENSE MINISTER JAGIVAN RAM RESPONDED TO NUMEROUS OPPOSITION COMMENTS ABOUT RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH(SETTEL).

4. ON RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, VAJPAYEE AVOIDED RESPONDING IN DETAIL ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON DISPUTED TERRITORY. HE CONFINED HIMSELF TO REITERATING THE DESIRE FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BUT NOTED THAT THE QUESTION OF LAND REMAINS UNQUOTE. HE ASKED HIS CRITICS TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THIS MATTER IT WAS NECESSARY TO GO STEP BY STEP. THERE ARE MANY CRITICAL QUESTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY, HE SAID, ON WHICH IT IS DIFFICULT TO DO ANYTHING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND ALSO DIFFICULT TO KEEP QUIET. HE EXPLAINED THE GOI'S REJECTION OF THE CHINESE PROTEST OVER THE DALAI LAMA, STATING THAT QUOTE OUT CHINESE FRIENDS UNQUOTE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT INDIA IS A DEMOCRACY WITH A FREE PRESS AND THUS PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE DALAI LAMA'S COURTESY CALLS ON MINISTERS HAD BEEN PUBLISHED. INDIA, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT ALLOW TIBETAN REFUGEES TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

5. THE FIVE HOUR DEBATE WAS DOMINATED BY PREDICTABLE CHARGES BY THE CONGRESS AND CPI MEMBERS THAT THE DESAI ADMINISTRATION HAS DEVIATED FROM TRADITIONAL FOREIGN POLICY LAID DOWN BY NEHRU. SINCE VAJPAYEE

HAS BEEN SO CAREFUL IN HIS PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE, THE OPPOSITION IN ITS CRITICISMS OFTEN RESORTED TO THE FOREIGN POLICY REMARKS OF RIGHTIST JANA SANGHI MEMBERS OF THE JANATA PARTY TO SUPPORT THEIR CASE. THE BURDEN OF THE OPPOSITION'S REFRAIN WAS THAT THE JANATA PARTY HAS SHIFTED AWAY FROM THE SOCIALIST STATES AND TOWARD THE US, AND THUS CONSIDERABLE REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, DIEGO GARCIA AND ARMS SUPPLIES IN ADDITION TO THE ISSUE OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM. IN HIS LOW KEYED RESPONSE, VAJPAYEE CHOSE TO IGNORE MOST OF THESE REMARKS AND INSTEAD TO CONCENTRATE UPON THE BROAD OUTLINES OF INDIAN POLICY, THE ADHERENCE TO NON-ALIGNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIMARY DUTY OF SAFEGUARDING AND ENLARGING THE ENLIGHTENED INTERESTS OF INDIA. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT AS A DEMOCRACY, INDIA WANTED TO HAVE DEMOCRACY IN THE WHOLE WORLD, BUT THAT IT HAS TO ACCEPT THE WORLD AS IT IS AND RECONGIZE THAT EVERY COUNTRY HAS THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN SOCIETY, FREE FROM FOREIGN INTERFERENCE.

GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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